



PROPERTY TRANSFER WELL INSPECTIONS

When you are selling or buying a property with a private well, you may be interested to know the condition of the well, the quality of the drinking water and whether there are any unused wells on the property. If so, you can choose to have the well and pressure system inspected, have the water tested for common contaminants, and have the property searched for unused wells.

State law does not require a well inspection or water testing for a property transfer, and DNR is not involved in the real estate transaction. However, if a well inspection is conducted, state law has provided since June 1, 2008, that it must be done by a licensed well driller or licensed pump installer. Several important regulations apply to ensure proper inspection and sampling. This page summarizes the regulations that apply to property transfer well and pressure system inspections effective October 1, 2014, and provides answers to some common questions. The regulations are found in NR 812, Wisconsin Administrative Code.

https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/nr/800/chap_nr812/812

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Licensing:

1. If a well and pressure system inspection is done as part of a property transfer, the inspection must be done by an individual who is a licensed well driller or a licensed pump installer.
2. Only a licensed individual well driller or pump installer may make any statement regarding wells that need to be filled and sealed, or regarding the location, compliance, condition, capacity or performance of a well or pressure system for compensation at the time of property transfer. If the only information provided at the time of property transfer is water test results from a certified lab, the samples may be collected by someone other than a licensed individual well driller or pump installer.
3. A list of licensed well drillers and pump installers who may perform inspections can be found at:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Wells/documents/WellInspectors.pdf>

Inspection Form:

1. DNR Form 3300-221 (<http://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/forms/3300/3300-221.pdf>) must be used by the inspector to report the results to the person who requested the inspection. The form lists all potential noncomplying features that an inspector is responsible for checking.
2. The inspection form is provided to the person requesting the inspection. Use of the form does not imply DNR approval of the well and pressure system.

Inspection:

1. The inspection includes visible and known noncomplying features of the well and pressure system. The inspection does not include the plumbing distribution system.
2. The inspector will evaluate the well and pressure system according to the code in effect at the time it was constructed or installed, except that when installed before February 1, 1991, it must comply with subch. IV of NR 812, and if ever used for potable water supply it must comply with the NR 812 requirements for potable water supplies.
3. The inspection must include a search for any unused or noncomplying wells that must be filled and sealed to protect groundwater and health. More information can be found here: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wells/fillingsealing.html>
4. The inspection must include all wells on the property. A separate inspection form may be used for each well.

Water Testing:

1. If you choose to have a property transfer well inspection, water samples are required to be taken and analyzed by a certified laboratory for coliform bacteria, nitrate and arsenic. Water sample test results are sent to the person requesting the inspection.
2. To locate a Wisconsin certified laboratory, click here: <http://dnr.wi.gov/regulations/labCert/#tabx7> Ask the lab if they are certified for drinking water analyses for coliform bacteria, nitrate and arsenic.
3. If you choose not to have a well inspection done, water may still be tested. Tests to consider can be found here: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wells/privatewelltest.html>
4. Though not required for the well inspection, an inspector may note any concerns regarding the capacity or performance of the well and pressure system in the inspection, including well or pump yield.

Setbacks and Separation Distances:

1. Certain separation distances and other requirements to ensure that wells are not located too close to potential sources of contamination or flooding. The inspector will evaluate a well for compliance with these requirements. A table of required separation distances can be found in NR 812.08.
2. NR 812 does not require any separation distance from a well to a lot line.

What to do with the Inspection Results:

1. If the inspector determines that a well or pressure system has a noncomplying feature, it remains a matter between the buyer and the seller. The inspector can provide advice on how to bring the system into compliance.
2. Information about the health risk of bacteria, arsenic or nitrate is available on DNR's website at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wells/privatewelltest.html>

Where to obtain Well Records:

1. The current homeowner may have water testing and well maintenance records, and a well construction report, sometimes referred to as a "well log".
2. Wisconsin requires that a registered well driller file a well log with the Wisconsin DNR. However, depending on the age of the well, this report may not have been submitted or older reports may not have enough location information to match with the current property address.
3. An inspector may provide a copy of the Well Construction Report with their inspection results. Many Well Construction Reports and other groundwater quality data are available using search tools on DNR's website. Go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Groundwater/data.html> for more information.